



U.S. Department of Justice
Executive Office for Immigration Review
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FACT SHEET

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL (OGC)

The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) provides legal advice to all components within the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), including the Board of Immigration Appeals, the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge, the Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer, and the Office of the Director. Staffed by the General Counsel, 14 Associate General Counsels, and several paralegals, the office handles all EOIR litigation, drafts statutory and regulatory amendments, and responds to requests and inquiries made under the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act. OGC also serves as the principal point of contact for U.S. Attorneys Offices, Justice Department components, and other Government agencies on all legal matters. These duties include responding to inquiries regarding general litigation support, subpoenas, and access to certified copies of EOIR documents such as the Records of Proceedings (ROP) from Immigration Courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals. OGC also provides guidance on professional ethics, and standards of conduct and reviews financial disclosure forms filed by agency personnel. EOIR's *Pro Bono* Program is also part of OGC.

◆ **Biographical Information**

Charles Adkins-Blanch, General Counsel

Charles Adkins-Blanch was appointed General Counsel in May 2000, after serving in the position in an acting capacity for 1 year. He received his undergraduate degree from Grinnell College in 1984 and his law degree from George Washington University's National Law Center in 1990. Before joining the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) Office of the General Counsel in April 1995, Mr. Adkins-Blanch worked for the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) from August 1990 to April 1995, where he served as a judicial law clerk under the Attorney General's Honor Law Program and was later promoted to the position of attorney/advisor. From 1989 to 1990, he clerked in private practice with the firm of Maggio & Kattar specializing in immigration and nationality law. He has also served in several legal intern and law clerk positions including working for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in their Washington Liaison Office providing legal counseling to asylum seekers. Mr. Adkins-Blanch is a member of both the Virginia and District of Columbia Bars.

Kevin J. Chapman, Deputy General Counsel

Kevin J. Chapman joined the staff of the Office of the General Counsel in October 2003. He received his B.S. in 1979 from Arkansas Tech University, and his J.D. in 1986 from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Mr. Chapman served as associate general counsel for the U.S. Marshals Service, Department of Justice, in Arlington, VA, from September 2000 to October 2003. Prior to this, he served as Staff Judge Advocate, U.S. Army, Fort McPherson, GA, from June 1999 to September 2000; Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, 3rd Infantry Division, U.S. Army, Fort Stewart, GA, from June 1997 to June 1999; and litigation attorney, U. S. Army litigation division, Arlington, VA, from June 1994 to June 1997. He is a member of the North Carolina Bar.

Jennifer J. Barnes, Associate General Counsel

Jennifer Barnes joined the staff of the Office of the General Counsel in April 1995. She received her B.A. at Miami University in 1976, her M.S.W. from Ohio State University in 1979, and her Juris Doctorate from the University of San Diego School of Law in 1988. Ms. Barnes joined the Department of Justice in the Attorney General's Honor Law Program in 1988 working for the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) as a trial attorney in San Francisco. Leaving San Francisco in 1990, she went to Headquarters INS to work in the Office of the General Counsel where she served as assistant general counsel focusing primarily on employer sanctions issues, and as associate general counsel where she managed the General Law Division. In July 1994, she became Appellate Counsel working as liaison between INS and the Executive Office for Immigration Review until April 1995. Ms. Barnes is a member of both the California and District of Columbia Bars.

Cecelia M. Espenoza, Senior Associate General Counsel

Cecelia Espenoza began working in the Office of the General Counsel in May 2003 after serving as a Board Member, Board of Immigration Appeals, since August 2000. She received her B.A. in 1979 and her Juris Doctorate in 1982, both from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Prior to her appointment to the Board, Ms. Espenoza taught immigration law and trial advocacy as an associate professor of law at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio, Texas, since July 1997. She also supervised law students in the Immigration Clinic at St. Mary's Center for Legal and Social Justice. From August 1990 to May 1997, Ms. Espenoza taught immigration and criminal law and evidence as an assistant professor of law at the University of Denver College of Law in Denver, Colorado, where she also developed an immigration externship program that placed students in immigration law positions. She has authored numerous articles on immigration matters in prominent legal publications. In Utah, Ms. Espenoza worked as a city prosecutor and assistant U.S. attorney in Salt Lake City from 1986 to 1990, and as a city prosecutor in Sandy City from 1984 to 1986. She was director of the migrant unit and bilingual attorney for the Utah Legal Services, Inc., from 1982 to 1984. Since 1982, Ms. Espenoza has served on several immigration-related panels of the American Bar Association (ABA), including the Pro Bono Immigration Board and the Immigration Coordinating Council. She chaired the ABA's Young Lawyer Immigration Committee from 1987 to 1989. She was selected as a National Hispana Leadership Institute Fellow for 2003. She is a member of the Utah, Colorado, and Texas State Bars.

George S. Farmakides, Associate General Counsel

George S. Farmakides joined the Office of the General Counsel in January 2002. He received his B.B.A. from James Madison University in 1990 and his Juris Doctorate from Case Western Reserve University in 1993. Prior to joining the General Counsel staff, Mr. Farmakides served as an associate general counsel with the Former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Washington, DC, from September 2000 to January 2002. He worked as an assistant district counsel for the INS in Miami, Florida, from August 1995 to September 2000. During this time, Mr. Farmakides also served as a special assistant US attorney in the major prosecutions division of the Miami US Attorney's Office from August 1996 to November 1998. From May 1993 to July 1995, he was in private practice in the Washington, DC, area. He is a member of both the Virginia and District of Columbia Bars.

Steven C. Lang, *Pro Bono* Coordinator

Steven C. Lang was appointed *Pro Bono* Coordinator for the Executive Office for Immigration Review in April 2000. He received his B.A. in 1990 from the University of Texas at Austin, and his Juris Doctorate in 1993 from the University of Houston Law Center. Mr. Lang served as Attorney-Coordinator for ProBAR (the South Texas *Pro Bono* Asylum Representation Project) in Harlingen, Texas, from June 1997 to February 2000. During this time, he initiated and supervised the ProBAR Legal Rights Project which makes live group rights presentations to all detainees at the Port Isabel Service Processing Center. From May 1994 to June 1997, Mr. Lang was in private immigration practice in Houston, Texas. He is a member of the Texas Bar.

Laurence D. Levine, Associate General Counsel

Laurence D. Levine joined the Office of the General Counsel in February 2001. He received his B.A. from the University of Florida in 1987 and his law degree from George Washington University's National Law Center in 1992. Prior to joining the General Counsel staff, Mr. Levine served as an attorney advisor with the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) at the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) from June 1995 to February 2001. During this time, he was detailed as a special assistant US attorney for the District of Columbia, Domestic Violence Unit, from March to July 1998. Mr. Levine worked from November 1994 to June 1995 as a legalization appeals officer at the Former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Washington, DC. He also served as a law clerk in the Office of the Chief Administrative Law Judge at the Department of Housing and Urban Development from May 1991 to October 1994. He is a member of both the Florida and District of Columbia Bars.

Ronald N. Ohata, Associate General Counsel

Ronald N. Ohata began working in the Office of the General Counsel in December 2000. Prior to this appointment, he served as Immigration Judge at the Immigration Court in Los Angeles from October 1995 to December 2000. Mr. Ohata received his B.A. from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1974, and his Juris Doctorate from Hastings School of Law in 1978. In 1984, he began his private law practice in Los Angeles, where he became a partner in the firm of Tan, Sakiyama and Ohata before moving his practice to Monterey Park in 1991. From 1979 to 1980, Mr. Ohata worked in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office and returned there in 1982 as a deputy district attorney after a 2-year assignment as a trial attorney in the Department of Justice Criminal Division in Washington, DC. He is a member of the California Bar.

Carolyn M. Piccotti, Associate General Counsel

Carolyn M. Piccotti began working in the Office of the General Counsel, Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), in November 1999. She received her undergraduate degree in 1979 from Dickinson College and her law degree in 1983 from the Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Prior to joining the General Counsel staff, Ms. Piccotti served as an attorney advisor with the Board of Immigration Appeals at EOIR, from May 1988 to November 1999. From September 1995 to January 1997, she completed a detail as a senior policy analyst with the United States Commission on Immigration Reform. Prior to joining the Department of Justice, Ms. Piccotti worked as a law clerk in the U.S. District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, from 1986 to May 1988. From 1983 to 1986, she served as litigation counsel with a private civil litigation firm. Ms. Piccotti is a member of the Pennsylvania Bar.

Sharon J. Pomeranz, Associate General Counsel

Sharon J. Pomeranz began working in the Office of the General Counsel in March 2003. She received her undergraduate degree in 1986 from San Diego State University, and her Juris Doctorate in 1991 from Southwestern University. From September 1991 to March 2003, Ms. Pomeranz served as senior assistant general counsel, U.S. General Services Administration, Washington, DC. She is a member of the California Bar.

Scott M. Rosen, Associate General Counsel

Scott Rosen began working in the Office of the General Counsel in December 1998. He received his B.B.A. in 1978 from Emory University, and his Juris Doctorate in 1983 from Cleveland State University, Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. From 1995 until December 1998, Mr. Rosen served as an appellate counsel for the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Falls Church, Virginia. He worked as an assistant district counsel for the INS in Miami, Florida, from 1989 to 1995. Mr. Rosen is a member of the Florida Bar.

Marta Rothwarf, Associate General Counsel

Marta Rothwarf began working in the Office of the General Counsel in June 2003. She received her undergraduate degree in 1979 from Douglass College, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; a Diploma in 1984 from the Textile Conservation Centre, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London; and her Juris Doctorate in 1990 from Temple University, Temple School of Law. From June 1997 to June 2003, Ms. Rothwarf served as an asylum officer for the Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)), in Washington, DC. She also served as an asylum officer in Los Angeles, CA, from November 1994 to June 1997. Ms. Rothwarf worked as a private attorney from September 1990 to November 1994. She is a member of the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and District of Columbia Bars.

Charles F. Smith, Associate General Counsel

Charles Smith began working in the Office of the General Counsel in January 1999. He received his undergraduate degree in 1989 from the University of Massachusetts and his law degree in 1996 from the District of Columbia School of Law. From January 1998 to December 1998, Mr. Smith worked as a law clerk at the District of Columbia Office of Bar Counsel in Washington, DC. He served as a staff counsel for the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia from August 1997 to December 1997. Mr. Smith also worked as a law clerk at the District of Columbia Office of Bar Counsel from January 1995 to August 1997. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Mali, West Africa, from 1989 to 1991. Mr. Smith is a member of the Massachusetts, Maryland, and District of Columbia Bars.

Gustavo D. Villageliu, Senior Associate General Counsel

Gustavo D. Villageliu began working in the Office of the General Counsel in May 2003 after serving as a Board Member, Board of Immigration Appeals, since July 1995. He graduated from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1977 (*cum laude*). While attending law school, Mr. Villageliu served as a legal clerk-research assistant with the University from September 1975 to May 1976, and as a Johnson County attorney prosecutor intern in Iowa City, Iowa. He joined the Board as a staff attorney in January 1978, and received numerous achievement awards after specializing in war criminal, investor, and criminal alien cases. He is a member of Amnesty International and an immigrant refugee from Cuba. In September 1989, he moved to Miami, Florida, as an immigration judge, managing both detained and non-detained dockets, as well as the Florida Northern Region Institutional Criminal Alien Hearing Docket, until his appointment to the Board in 1995. Mr. Villageliu is a member of the Florida and District of Columbia Bars.

Bruce I. Waxman, Associate General Counsel

Bruce I. Waxman joined the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), Office of the General Counsel, in May 2000 as an Associate General Counsel, specializing in employment law matters. He received his B.S. from the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University in 1964, and his Juris Doctorate from the Columbia University School of Law in 1967. Mr. Waxman worked previously in the Department of Commerce, where he began in 1983 as a labor relations specialist in the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) and served for many years as a senior counsel in the Employment and Labor Law Division of the Department's Office of General Counsel. He also served briefly as Acting Chief, Office of Labor Counsel, in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. While at Commerce and the PTO, Mr. Waxman represented agency management before the Federal Labor Relations Authority, the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Foreign Service Grievance Board, and in dealings with the Office of Special Counsel. Before his Federal government career, he was Director of Collective Bargaining, Association of Flight Attendants; Executive Director, DC Public Employee Relations Board; and a staff counsel, American Federation of Government Employees. He is a member of the District of Columbia Bar, the Federal Bar Association, and the Society of Federal Labor Relations Professionals.

Kathleen Zweig, Associate General Counsel

Kathleen Zweig joined the Office of the General Counsel in July 1998 and was appointed deputy general counsel in June 2001. She served in this position until October 2003. Ms. Zweig received her B.A. from Pennsylvania State University in 1990, and her Juris Doctorate from the University of San Diego School of Law in December 1995. From March 1998 to July 1998, Ms. Zweig completed a detail at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington, DC, serving as a special assistant US attorney. She worked as an attorney advisor in the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge in Falls Church, Virginia, from August 1997 to March 1998. She also served as a judicial law clerk at the Immigration Court in Arlington, Virginia, from October 1996 to August 1997. Ms. Zweig is a member of the Virginia Bar.